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City Document.—No. 17.

CITY OF BOSTON.



R E P O R T

ON

PETITION OF F. T. GRAY AND AL.

ON ADULT SCHOOLS.

City Hall, March 13, 1851.

To the President of the Common Council.

SIR:—In conformity with the request of the School Committee, I transmit to you the accompanying documents for the consideration of the Common Council.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN P. BIGELOW,

Chairman of School Committee.

In Common Council, March 13, 1851.

Referred together with the accompanying documents, to the Committee on Public Instruction, with leave to report in print.

Sent up for concurrence.

FRANCIS BRINLEY, *President.*

In Board of Mayor and Aldermen,

March 17, 1851.

Concurred.

JOHN P. BIGELOW, *Mayor.*

The Committee on Public Instruction, to whom was referred the petition of Rev. Charles F. Barnard, and also the order from the School Committee in relation to an appropriation for the Free Evening Schools established in the Warren and Pitts Street Chapels

R E P O R T .

That the report adopted by the School Committee, which is appended, sets forth the merits and claims of these Schools in so clear a manner, that your Committee do not feel called upon to add any words of their own in relation to the subject, further than to express their interest in these institutions, their belief that they accomplish a great amount of good, their hope that the number will be increased, and that they will continue to receive the approbation of the public.

The Committee unanimously recommend the adoption of the following order by the City Council.

For the Committee,

JOHN P. BIGELOW, *Chairman.*

Ordered, That the sum of five hundred dollars be and the same hereby is appropriated for the use of the School Committee in aid of the Free Evening Schools established in the City, in the Warren and Pitts Street Chapels.

To the School Committee of the City of Boston.

GENTLEMEN :

The undersigned respectfully request your Board to ask for a small sum of money from the City Council, to be applied in aid of the "Adult Evening School," established in the Chapel in Pitts street, which is open to all who apply for admission, and who do not attend our Public Schools. The sum required is small, and the power of appropriation is in the City Council, as appears by the 137th Chapter of the Statutes of the Commonwealth for the year 1847, in which "Adult Schools" are legalized in the State. The statute reads that after the money shall have been appropriated,

"It shall be at the disposal of the School Committee of the town or city to be expended by them for the purpose aforesaid, in such manner as they may deem expedient."

Very respectfully,

FREDERICK T. GRAY,
EPHRAIM PEABODY.

In School Committee, February 18, 1851.

Read and referred to Messrs. Reed, Adams, Beecher, Eaton, and Alger.

Attest :

S. F. McCLEARY, JR.,
Secretary.

The Committee to whom was referred the petition of F. T. Gray and Ephraim Peabody that the City would aid in the support of the Adult Evening School established in Pitts Street Chapel, respectfully

R E P O R T:

Your Committee find that the School for Adults in Pitts Street Chapel has now been in operation two winters. It was originally established by the Rev. Messieurs Gray and Peabody, and has continued under their care; the School being always attended by one of them. It has been found necessary to have one special teacher to superintend the School, and Mr. Charles E. Valentine Sub-Master of the Quincy School has been employed for this purpose. He has been aided in the work of instruction by the voluntary efforts of a number of ladies and gentlemen, who have devoted themselves with great diligence and perseverance to the service. It has been kept on four evenings of each week, twice a week for females and twice a week for males—two hours, on each evening commencing at 7 o'clock, and for five months in the year commencing the 1st of October. The average attendance of males and females is somewhat more than two hundred.

The success of the School in Pitts Street appears to have equalled the most sanguine expectations of its friends. We think that no one can visit it, without being struck with the earnestness with which the pupils are engaged in their studies; or without being con-

vinced that their efforts will be attended with the most important results.

About the same time that the petition for aid for the Pitts Street School was presented to this Board, a similar petition for assistance for an Adult School kept in the Warren Street Chapel, was presented by Rev. C. F. Barnard directly to the City Council. This petition was referred by that body to the Committee on Public Instruction ; and we learn that the proposition is favorably regarded by that Committee, and that there is every reason to suppose that an appropriation will be made by the City Council, sufficient to satisfy the wants of both Schools, if asked for by this Board.

The School in the Warren Street Chapel was commenced by Rev. Mr. Barnard fifteen years since, and has continued under his superintendence ever since. It commenced with only two scholars, but has been steadily increasing in numbers and usefulness. It is attended by from 70 to 80 males, and by from 130 to 140 females. It is conducted much in the same way as the other, this being in fact the model School, it having been the first of the kind established in Boston. We doubt not that these Schools have carried light to many minds which would otherwise have passed through the world in darkness, and been the source of comfort and happiness to many families which would otherwise have been degraded and miserable.

There is still another Adult School which is kept in South Boston ; but this is understood to be supported by a charitable fund, and to need no assistance from the City.

The work of rescuing our fellow beings from a state of utter, and otherwise hopeless ignorance, is both one of the highest acts of charity, and one of the most im-

portant uses, not merely to the individuals themselves, but to society at large. He who feeds the hungry does a good deed ; but he who imparts that knowledge which not only enables the hungry to obtain his own food, but makes him an intelligent useful member of society, does a far better one. Though it may well be questioned, whether the City should be called upon to *establish* Adult Schools, it ought not, we think, to remain an unconcerned spectator of those which have been established, and are chiefly sustained by private efforts and charity, or refuse the small pecuniary aid which is asked in their behalf.

According to the Statutes of the Commonwealth, “in addition to the grants of money for common Schools, which cities and towns are now by law authorized to make ; any city or town may appropriate such further sums of money as it may deem expedient for the support of Schools for the instruction of adults in reading, writing, English grammar, arithmetic and geography.

“Such moneys shall be assessed, levied, collected and paid into the treasury in the same manner that other town and city taxes are, and shall then be at the disposal of the School Committee of the town or city, to be expended by them, for the purpose aforesaid, in such manner as they may deem expedient.”

The sum required for the Adult Schools in Warren and Pitts street, the present year, is \$500, or \$250 for each ; and your Committee unanimously recommend the adoption of the following orders.

Respectfully submitted,

SAMPSON REED,
Z. B. ADAMS,
EDWARD BEECHER,
GEO. EATON,
F. ALGER.

Ordered, That the City Council be requested to make an appropriation of the sum of five hundred dollars, to be expended by the Grammar School Committee, in aid of the Schools for Adults in Pitts street and Warren street, in such manner as they may deem expedient.

Ordered, That the Mayor be requested to bring the above order before the notice of the City Council.

In School Committee, March 11, 1851.

Read, accepted, and orders passed.

Attest:

S. F. McCLEARY, JR.,

Secretary.